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5/15/99

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)

FDA 4374 '99 MAY 19 P4:20  
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

This comment responds to Docket #98N-1038 "Irradiation in the production, processing and handling of food"

To whom it may concern (all of us),

The FDA is failing to protect me and those I love. The question of labeling of food in general is an area where the FDA is moving in the opposite direction from what we need.

I see no reason to remove the requirement for labeling irradiated foods. Consumers' choice of what we eat, our option to choose is all your new rule changes. I strongly disagree with this. The agribusiness industry does not want the public to retain choice because it knows a large percentage (and growing percentage) of even the uninformed U.S. population mistrusts food irradiation and will not choose to buy it. I demand (!) that your agency recognize the infringement on the rights of the citizens of this country posed by this proposed rule.

The public is never served by being denied access to information, especially, ultimately that which directly affects our health. Irradiation is a new technology in human society. It's long-term effects are, yes, still undetermined.

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From my sources I understand the resulting effects of irradiating food likely include nutrient loss (if only because retarded spoilage will result in longer shelf life — a weakened vitality as food ages), radiolytic by-products which could be health-damaging (ie. increasing levels of benzene in meats). There are many other health-impairing possibilities you are aware of, as am I.

I want the radura prominently displayed on the face of any <sup>irradiated</sup> food label. I want a return to the large size radura, placed proximate to the name of the food, clearly, conspicuously visible to anyone.

I want appropriate, easily-understood text that allows public decision-making at point of purchase.

As you know 79% of the U.S. public polled, including everyone but one I know, doesn't want irradiated food. Let us choose!

P.S. If you do not label and one time Joe Public buys a food that <sup>easily</sup> develops salmonella or e coli but handles it casually, he may not sicken. But should he or other food handlers become less and less careful with sanitation because of the "magic bullet" of irradiation, what happens when non-irradiated food is prepared, stored, transported? What about his immunity? The FDA will ignore many such illnesses or deaths, it seems likely, before it would begin to question the existence/availability of any "natural" (non-irradiated) food.

You, the FDA, are going toward wrong solutions to food safety problems. *Concurredly yours Pat Battle*

WANT TRANSCRIBED FOR YOUR BENEFIT BY DIANE NETTLES

*I have owned a kitchen  
cooked professionally for many  
years currently I am a vegetable  
grower!*

Pat Battle  
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